

St. George's Gallery Prints

Merlyn Evans. Vertical Suite in Black

This catalogue announces the publication
of the Vertical Suite in Black by Merlyn Evans

The prints are exhibited
from 5th February to 5th March 1958 at
St. George's Gallery Prints
7 Cork Street . London W1 / REGent 36 60

Merlyn Evans . Vertical Suite in Black



- 1 Merlyn Evans: **Helmet Mask** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on zinc

29¼ x 20 in (74.3 x 50.8 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

Edition limited to 50 copies signed by the artist

10 gns

The Artist

Since 1946 Merlyn Evans has been working & living in London. He is married to Margerie Few, the concert pianist, and is a teacher of etching & engraving at the Central School of Arts & Crafts

Born in 1910 in Cardiff, he went to Scotland with his parents and began to draw & paint at an early age, having private lessons from John Houston RSA & Charles Houston RSWs. His first instruction in engraving on zinc was from the Scots Rome scholar in engraving, Charles Murray

Evans found his way to London in the early 'thirties, travelled about and worked in various countries in Europe, and some years before the war went to live in South Africa

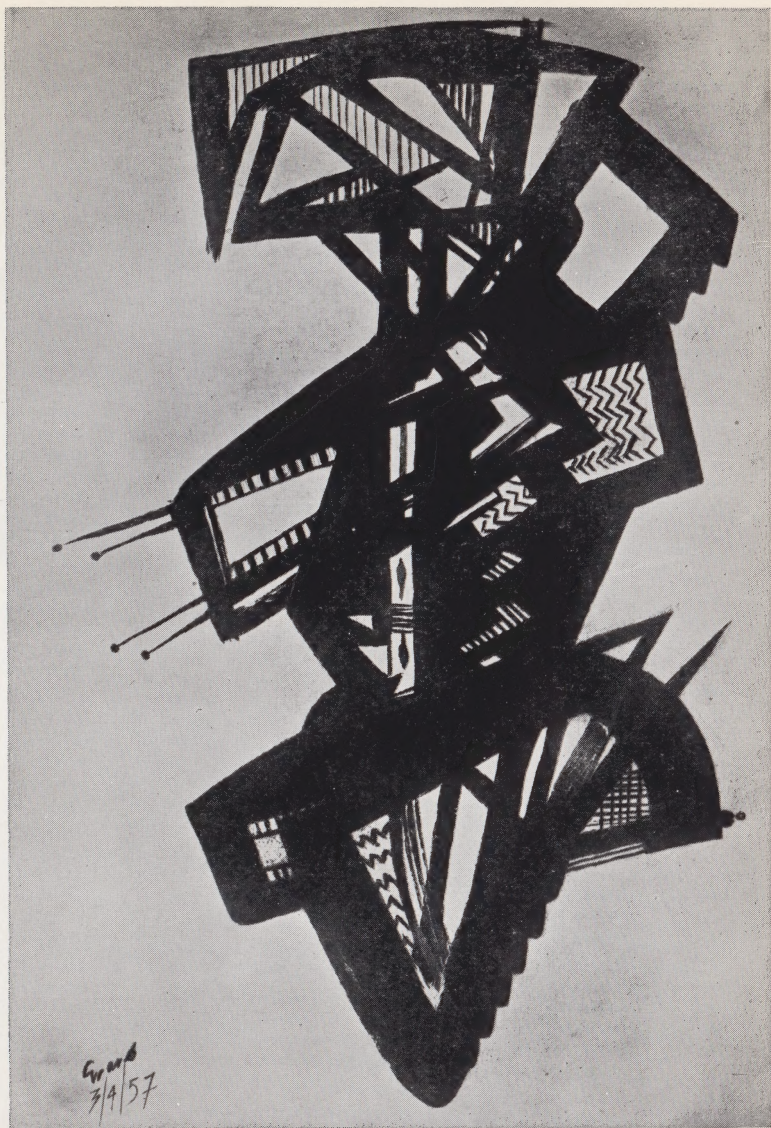
He saw war service with the 8th Army in North Africa and Italy, returning to London in 1945

Evans is by nature a painter, though he is also possessed of an exceptional talent for portrait drawing. Extremely conscientious with his materials, he will work with the greatest care upon a painting, drawing or etching, until it has the quality of flawlessness. This is not to say that his work is ever permitted to become overworked: on the contrary, his prints especially always demonstrate the very necessary balance between a professional execution and spontaneity of handling

Although in some of his earlier prints Evans has used the tonal & textural resources of resin-ground aquatint, sometimes alone and sometimes in combination with burin and etched line, in the present series 'Vertical Suite in Black' the approach is directed and predominantly handled with the brush; sugar aquatint being ideally suited to this painterly attitude

In the richness which he has been able to command & control, Evans has shown the value of the medium to painters: nowhere else are the blacks so black, or greys so infinitely variable; nowhere else can the swift passage of a brush-stroke be so suddenly enshrined in the plate, to impart to the printed image its deft calligraphy

Robert Erskine / February 1958



- 2 Merlyn Evans: **Standing Figure** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on zinc

29½ x 19⅞ in (74.9 x 50.5 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

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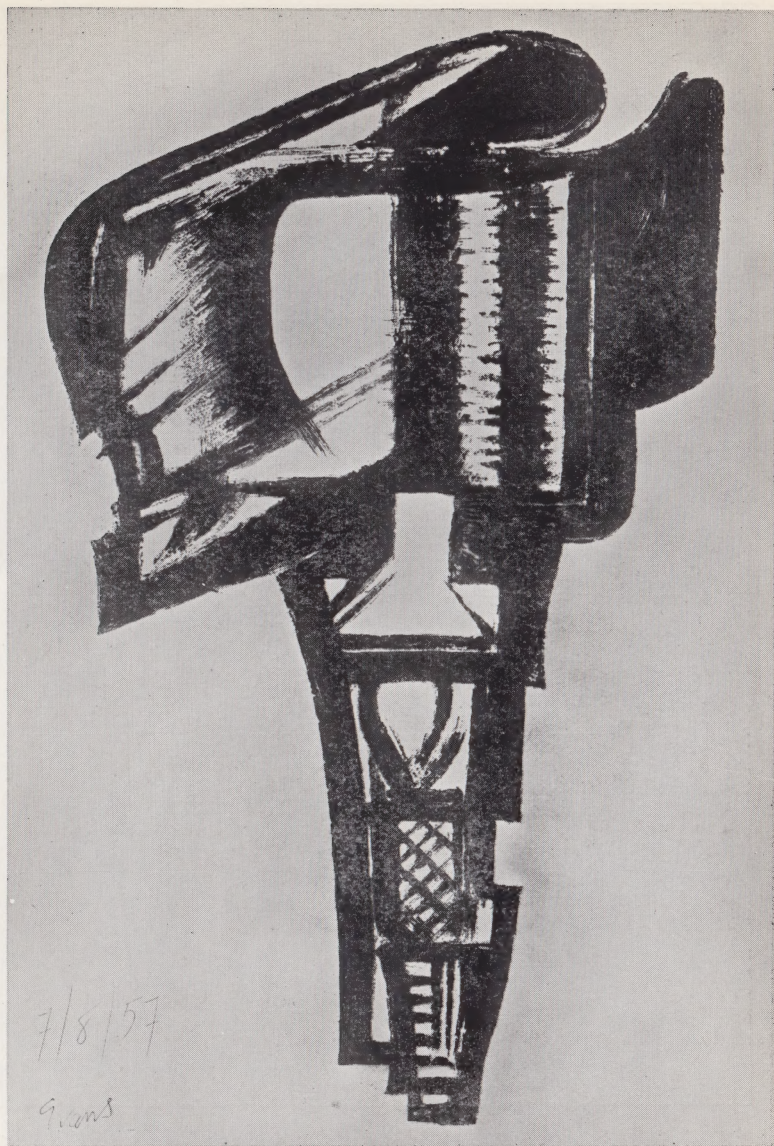
3 Merlyn Evans: **Corn Ghost** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on zinc

27 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{7}{8}$ in (70.8 x 50.5 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

Edition limited to 50 copies signed by the artist

10 gns



- 4 Merlyn Evans: **Skull** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on zinc

29 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 20 in (74.6 x 50.8 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

Edition limited to 50 copies signed by the artist

10 gns



- 5 Merlyn Evans: **Seed Pod** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on zinc

29 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 in (74.3 x 50 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

Edition limited to 50 copies signed by the artist

10 gns

The Prints

This series or suite of etchings may, in part, find their source or origin in my friendship with two great authorities on African sculpture, Margaret Webster Plass and William Fagg. My enthusiasm for African sculpture was not a new one; I had studied it in many parts of the world and in Africa, where I spent some years. During the course of our friendship the conversation would naturally turn to African carving, and aspects of the work were revealed to me by their insight and experience, that deepened my appreciation

Eventually, on one occasion, Margaret Plass presented me with a splendid horned antelope dance mask, the work of an artist from the Bambara tribe, and later some of the more 'abstract' Ashanti gold weights

About this time I began Vertical Suite in Black, in homage to African carving, from which these designs derive

- 1 Thus **Helmet Mask** bears a strong resemblance to the great Baga dance mask representing a maternity goddess, recently acquired by the British Museum
- 2 **Standing Figure** has the stiff, hieratic, abrupt angularity of sculpture by the Dogon tribe in the French Sudan
- 3 The feathery **Corn Ghost** is a near descendant of a funerary figure of the Bakota tribe in Gabon — now in the Musée de l'Homme
- 4 The hatchet-headed **Skull** has the family characteristics of Bajokwe carvings from Angola
- 5 **Seed Pod**, a heart-shaped fertility symbol and
- 6 **Thunderbird** introduce a dynamic element of time & emergence more reminiscent of carvings from the Torres Straits and New Ireland, which makes them cousins several removes away from their more static associates in isolated silhouette

Merlyn Evans

The Edition

Vertical Suite in Black has been printed by C H Welch in an edition of 50 copies on a fine Whatman mould-made paper, in Double Elephant size, 210 lb. There are 5 artist's proofs, and a small number of trial prints & states, never exceeding 8 prints per plate. The price is 10 gns per print, or 55 gns for the entire suite of 6 aquatints. They are published by St. George's Gallery as from 5th February 1958. The artist's proofs are priced at 15 gns



6 Merlyn Evans: **Thunderbird** from Vertical Suite in Black 1957

Sugar aquatint on copper

29 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 22 in (74.6 x 55.9 cm) on paper 39 x 27 in (99.1 x 68.6 cm)

Edition limited to 50 copies signed by the artist

10 gns

